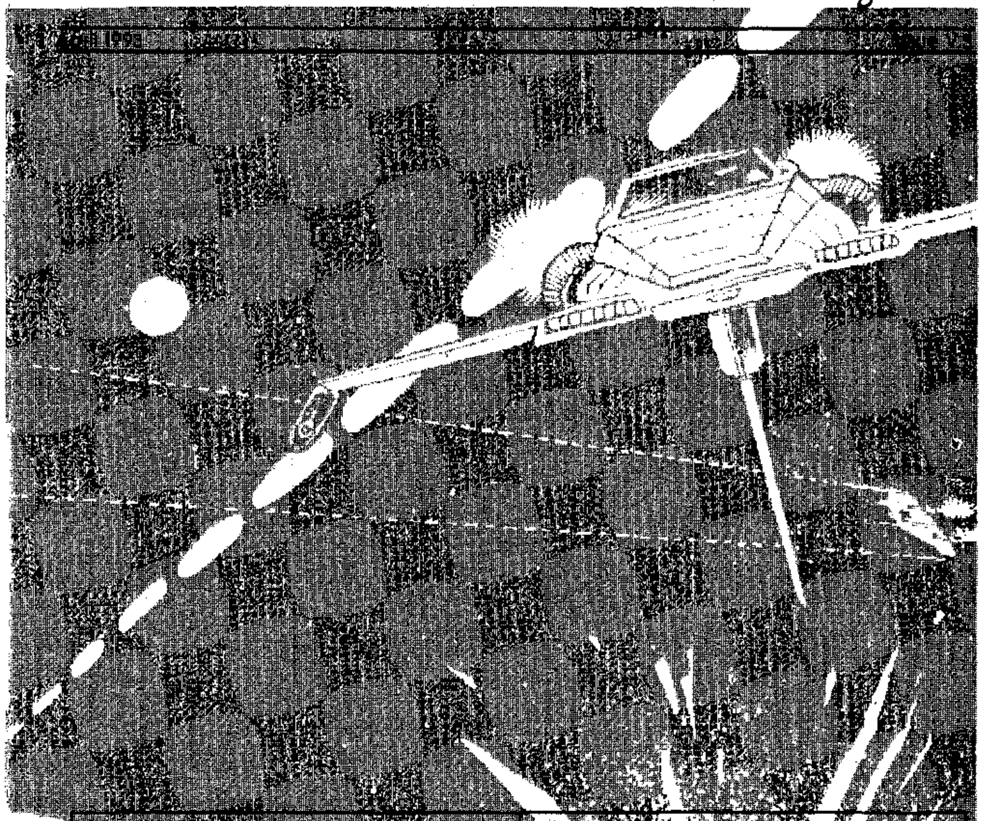
The DACE Desktop



An Information & Opinion Exchange Newsletter



FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

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Sum Won Wannabe

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Mark Butler
John Dickerson
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Jack Garrett
Larry Mangum

The DACE Desktop is the official newsletter of the Diablo valley Atari Computer Enthusiasts and permission is hereby granted for anyone wishing to use the content as long as the original source and author are given credit.

If you have any feedback, opinions, comments, or suggestions, please feel free to contact the editor or one of the officers.

DACE is an informal association of Atari computer owners formed to further expand the potential of the Atari lines by exchanging information and mutual assistance.

DACE is a non-profit organization and not affiliated with Atari Corporation. We support all present and future Atari computers.

Membership is $30/year and entitles you to receive this newsletter, AtariUser, discounts on raffles, Disks Of the Month, and participation in our DACE Marque program.

For further information, please contact Daniel A. Galant at (510)689-8256.

The Editor Speaks

Well. What do you think of the new look to our DACE Desktop? I thought it might be time for a change and after seeing the newsletter put out by our neighbors up in Santa Rosa, I thought I might give this style a try.

Do you like it? Do you hate it? Do you find it easier to follow or more difficult to read? Do you find it fits on your shelf better? Would you like to return to the old format? Give me some feedback, after all, it's your newsletter too.

I've been trying to push for someone to step forward and take up the job of producing our monthly newsletter. So far, no such luck. Does anyone care if you even get a newsletter? Should we perhaps stop putting one out altogether? It would seem, at least to myself, that in general the membership doesn't care. If it mattered then someone would come forward and help out.

Now it can't be that not one member has the time to put in to produce this puppy. And please don't tell me that you know nothing about Desktop Publishing. The club has the software if you don't, and there's plenty of help available to get you up and running.

To be quite frank, I'm not sure how long I can continue to act as interim Editor, my wife has discovered I've been doing it again... and well...

So unless we wish to stop publishing a monthly communication, someone please drop me a line or talk to me at one of the meetings. I'd really hate to see this fold, I kind of like the thing.

Till next month...here's hoping.

The President's Page

by Daniel A. Galant

Well here you have it. The debut of the NEW DACE Desktop. What do you think? Personally, I like it, but then I might be showing some biased. After all, I worked on it long enough.

While attending the Sacramento Expo, I met some of our 'Brothers' from Santa Rosa and they had with them one of their newsletters, (I wish we had thought to bring some of our own—next time.) Anyway, It was done in this format and I thought it looked rather nice, so I figured I give it a try for ours and see how it all came out.

This is the result. It may need a few tweeks here and there still but all in all, I think it came out rather well. I would be interested in whatever feedback you might have as to how you, the membership, feel about this format.

The May meeting is coming up and you won't want to miss this one. Bob Brodie will be our guest speaker and if I need to tell you who he is, then you must be very new to the Atari scene. Just in case you are though, Bob happens to be the Director of Communications for Atari. If there's something cooking at the mother company, Bob knows what it is and he's the fella who can talk about it. (That is—if it can be talked about at all.)

I don't know if Bob will be bringing any surprises for us to take a peak at, but the last time he was here it was one interesting meeting and a dandy good time. Be sure to be there for the excitement.

Other news you might want to be up on is the upcoming Writers Contest. We have already had a few submissions so don't get caught without one. Remember: there's no limit to the number of entries or their content, you simply need to have the 'Atari' somewhere in the piece. And oh yes, each entry is worth Dace Marques.

You're going to want to start collecting those Dace Marques because we already have some wonderful items that will be in the Holiday Auction at the end of the year.

Foremost, we have recently received a donation from a computer club over in Marin consisting of a working 1040STf and an external SF314 drive. Both of these items will be up for bids come December and I, for one, wouldn't mind getting either or both of them.

Another item that will be on the block is an official Codehead T-Shirt, generously donated by those Codeheads themselves at the Sacramento Expo, (thanks fellas). So write articles, stories and attend meetings, they're all worth Marques.

Page Editor - DTP for the 8-bit

by "Mr G" (LCACE)

The following comes to us via the April issue of the Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts. I hope you enjoy it.

Having received my assignment to present a program report on the program *Page Editor* by Alan Kirk at our January meeting, I was surprised to see how good this program was for us 8-bitters. It got me going so much that I am not only going to report on this fine program, but will include some others that I found to very good as well.

The *Page Editor* is a desktop publishing program for the 8-bit machines. It took Alan Kirk over two years to develope and it allows you to use the 80 column mode without any periphirals. It is complete with the documentation, clipart functions (either from the program or *Print Shop Graphics*), typeface files and utility files to convert word processing files. For anyone interested in getting into 8-bit desktop publishing, this program is super.

Page Editor will run on *BASIC*, but Alan suggests using *Turbo-BASIC* by Frank Ostrowski to improve the running speed. Alan sent our club, (*LCACE that is—ed.*), the disk and states that it is public domain. For those of you who wish to get in touch with Alan:

Alan Kirk
1274 Moneda Ave.
N. Keizer, OR 97303-6233
(503)390-6741

Another good program for the 8-bit is *DiskIO Plus* from Antic-December 1985, Volume 4, Number 8 by patrick Dell'Era. This disk utility is very easy to use and allows you to print directories in double column format, alphabetised and numbered. Besides this, it can let you move docs to your printer and give you a hard copy in minutes.

For the technical minded, might I reccomend *Circuit Database* by Randolph Constan—; —Analog Computing no 24, November 1984. This is a neat little program that lets you draw out schematics using the joystick. When you have made your schematic on the screen, the program will print it.

Last but not least, how about a nice little program called *Musorqa* by Ron Torborg; Analog No 34, September 1985. This program converts your touch tablet into a musical instrument. Just the thing for Bobby Bell so he can play it for his girlfriend TJ.

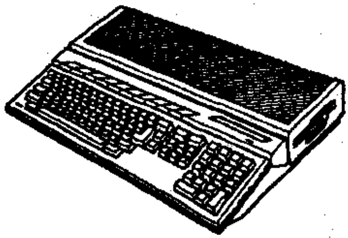
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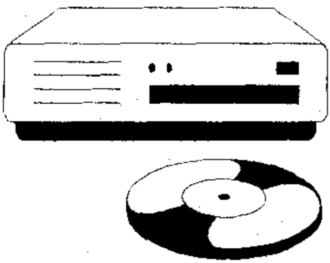
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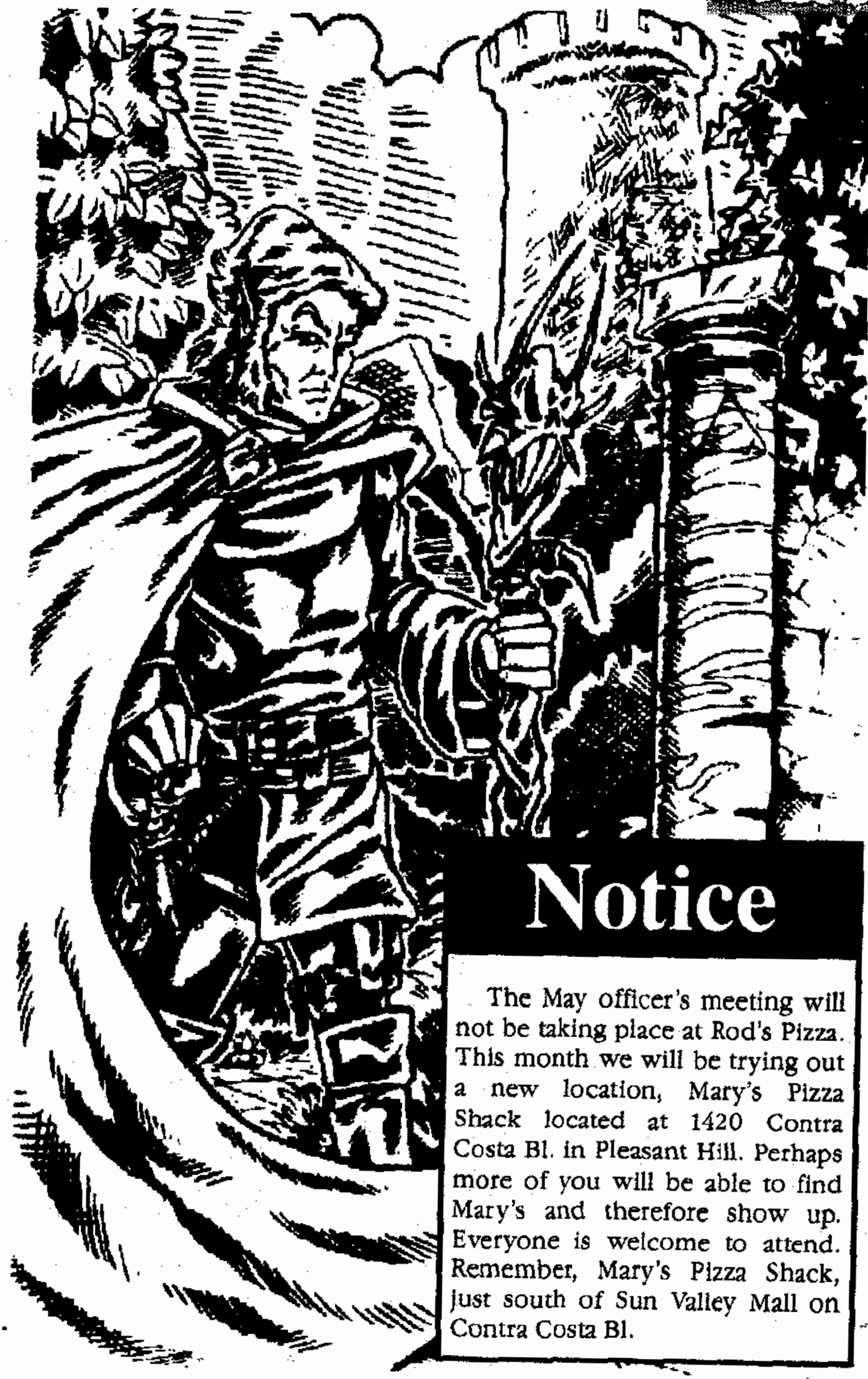
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Notice

The May officer's meeting will not be taking place at Rod's Pizza. This month we will be trying out a new location, Mary's Pizza Shack located at 1420 Contra Costa Bl. in Pleasant Hill. Perhaps more of you will be able to find Mary's and therefore show up. Everyone is welcome to attend. Remember, Mary's Pizza Shack, just south of Sun Valley Mall on Contra Costa Bl.

Bit Maker—An Eagle it Ain't

by Kervyn Mach (MVACE)

Everyone has probably seen on PBS or the Discovery Channel a documentary about the gooney birds which live on islands in the south Pacific.

Though graceful in flight, their takeoffs are characterized by frantic dashes over rocks, sand and each other, accompanied by vigorous flapping of wings. Similarly, landings are most kindly described as controlled crashes, with the bird often turning a couple somersaults before coming to rest.

What, you ask, has this to do with computer software? Well, I found remarkable parallels between the flying prowess of the gooney birds and the performance of Bit Maker. Bit Maker does what it advertises, but its starting and stopping are not elegant.

Bit Maker actually consists of three programs. The first, DMF_TO_H.PRG, converts Pagestream .DMF fonts to .??H screen fonts. PBFTOABF.PRG creates Adobe .ABF fonts from Type 1 fonts, and DMF_GDOS.PRG converts .DMF fonts to GDOS screen and printer fonts. DMF_GDOS.PRG is the only one of these which I have used; all my remarks apply to it.

I ran DMF_GDOS.PRG on an unmodified 1040ST. For the first try, I copied the program to a new disk, loaded it, and fed it a Pagestream font. The manual gives a fairly good description of what you must do, but it ignores a few items which would make life easier for new users. For instance, you must choose to generate either a screen font or a printer font.

If you choose to generate a screen font, you have to specify 45x45, 45x90, or 90x90. It took me a while to figure this one out, but I finally realized that these are low, medium, and high resolution fonts, respectively. Wouldn't it have been simpler to make the menu read low, medium, or high resolution? I don't *really care how many pixels a given* font requires.

Similarly, if you elect to generate a printer font, you can choose among 120x144, 180x180, 300x300, or 360x360. If none of these satisfies you, you can input your own values.

The manual for my 9-pin printer says it will print 60 dots per inch in text mode, or 240 in graphics mode. The ink jet printer will print 300. Evidently, a certain amount of experimentation is necessary. It would have been nice though, if the manual included a table of popular printers and the resolutions they can achieve.

Having selected the resolution, you have to choose a point size. The menu gives you a selection of sizes from 8 to 20 points in two point increments, plus 24, 30, and 36 points. Or, you can specify your own. Finally, you specify a font number. It seems that every font must have a number or GDOS gets confused. DMF__GDOS supplies 37 as a default starting number. It's up to you to keep track.

OK, we've charged along the sand, flapping our wings madly, and we're finally off the ground. But was it a successful takeoff? Click on OK and DMF__GDOS reads the target font and begins converting. It creates a new name from the original name plus the point size.

As it converts, it displays the ASCII code of the current character. On the first try, it got up to the letter 'u' or thereabouts, then crashed, leaving three bombs. Reboot and try again. Same result. Reboot and try again, but with a different target font. It went a little farther before crashing.

There seeems to be a pattern here. Maybe it's running out of memory. I made a new boot disk with only the control panel and Universal Item Selector III as accessories and rebooted. Try the first font again. By the way, you can save your preferences, but it doesn't seem to do any good. Our feet are getting sore from running down the sand. Wait! We're in the air! We're flying! Ohio State didn't give me that PhD for nothing. It's neat, the way the converted characters march across the top of the screen, but why couldn't they use more than the top 10%?

OK, it must be time to save the result; the file selector box popped up. That's where I want it to go, so click on OK. The drive is spinning, but what's this? The menu is all garbled! The drive has stopped, but what do I do now? Did it finish? All the menu windows have nonsense characters in them. Which one was Quit? Here it is in the manual. Click on that and see what happens. We're back on the desktop and no bombs, so we didn't crash but we did a couple somersaults when we landed.

Did it really make a GDOS font? Load a font editor and see. Yes, the editor reads and displays the new font, but grumbles about something called horizontal offsets which will not be used. Let's convert some more and try to use them in an application.

I converted two .DMF fonts to screen fonts, since I wanted to use them in Calligrapher, which generates printer fonts when it needs them. I made a selection of sizes ranging from 8 to 24 points, following the sizes in the fonts supplied with Calligrapher.

Each separate size required restarting DMF__GDOS and ended with the same controlled crash. It took a long time to generate a family. One of the fonts was called Saturn. It's a very heavy, arty font, probably best for posters and advertisements. I added it to the font file

for Calligrapher and modified the ASSIGN.SYS file to match. (Isn't GDOS a pain?) I rebooted Calligrapher and tried the new font.

It displayed on the screen, but even though I specified the 10 point size, the second line slightly overlapped the first and the characters seemed much larger than those of the other font in the text. When I tried to print, Calligrapher bombed. I don't know whether this is the fault of the font or whether Calligrapher ran out of memory (it gets a little cramped in one meg).

So there things stand. Thanksgiving and Christmas came and my experiments had to wait. I sent a letter to MegaType, the makers of Bit Maker, but have had no response. I will continue my experiments and keep you posted. I repeat what I said up front: DMF_GDOS works, but it lacks polish. It gives the impression of a beta version released too early.

Treasurer's Report

by Daniel A. Galant (substituting)

Actually, there is no report for this month due to the fact that it was April and as we all know—April means tax time. However, John assures me that we do indeed have money in the bank—although not as much as we used to have—and we should be able to survive a little longer.

One method that help us stick around awhile would be for us to acquire some new members and thereby get some more dues money. Another method would be for our current members to attend more meetings and buy Disks of the Month and raffle tickets. These are both good income producers since we have paid very little for the merchandise we have available for raffle.

DACE is a non-profit organization, but we still have regular expenses to meet. This newsletter is one of them. Our current membership is not enough to fully support the number of newsletters we send out. Remember, we share newsletters with several other clubs as well as sending out to the membership.

In several of the newsletters I received this past month, mention was made that they may be folding soon if things do not change. Do not let this happen to us. Support your club—participate.

DACE Notes

by Daniel A. Galant

April was another fun and entertaining meeting, even if it was sparsely attended. Owing to the absence of Jack Garrett, (I hope you were not sick Sir Jack) I will attempt to relay to you all the happenings of that night.

A good portion of the meeting was taken with a demo of Microprose's new game Civilization. This is a game wherein you attempt to develop the most successful civilization in the world. Yet another in the 'god game' genre of computer games, this one however, mixes a certain amount of teaching with its entertainment.

As you develop and expand your culture you must discover technological advances such as writing and the wheel. Certain advances are necessary in order for you to develop further advances. As you do, you learn a bit about each advance and thereby learn a little about our history. Look for a more in-depth review of Civilization in an upcoming newsletter.

Also at the April meeting we discussed the Sacramento Atari Expo and showed off some of the wonderful items we picked up there that will be in future raffles. Our experience there also gave rise to a few ideas we intend to follow up on in the near future. Some of those ideas included our making a banner for future such events, coffee mugs and possibly even t-shirts.

This has also led us to another possible contest for the club, redesigning our DACE logo. If you have any artistic ability or even if you don't, submit a potential logo that we could use on our publications, banners and other collectibles. There might even be some DACE Marques in it for ya.

We raffled off a copy of Captive for the ST and one of the coffee mugs from the Sacramento show. I don't remember who took the prizes home but I'm sure they were happy. Since Jack wasn't at the meeting, no DACE Marques were given out. If you were there, don't forget to collect your Marques at the May meeting. (We have to go on the honor system here folks...so be nice.)

Thought for the Month

Why do you recite at a play, and play at a recital?

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A DOM Survey

Guess what. Another little survey—Just for You. The last one was so successful, I thought I would run another one. This time I would like to know what sort of programs you would like to see on our regular Disks of the Month. Do you want Utilities? Games? Clip Art? Animations? Demos? Just mark your preferences and return this page at one of the meetings or drop it in the mail. (Maybe even with the other survey you probably still have...eh?)

- ☐ **Utilities**: Ram Disks, Copy programs, Accessories, etc.
- ☐ **Games**: You know, we do them all the time.
- ☐ **Clip Art**: Images, Artwork, Photos.
- ☐ **Animations**:
- ☐ **Demos**: Functional versions of retail packages you can try before you buy.

Suggestions and comments: ______________________

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Whats NekST...?!

Good queSTion. Our May meeting will be held at the Contra Costa Water District Building, 1331 Concord Ave. in Concord. We will meet in the main conference room on May 6th at 7:00pm. If you don't know how to get the CCWD bldg, call one of the numbers listed inside and ask for directions.

May will be a meeting you'll not want to miss as our Guest Speaker will be none other that Bob Brodie from Atari. Let's do our best to give Bob a great turnout for this one and make him feel welcome. Who knows, he might even bring a Falcon.

If you havn't been to a meeting recently, now is the time to show up. There are lots happening at Atari and Bob is the fellow to ask your questions of. His last visit with us was very informative and even fun. This one should prove to be no less interesting.

DOM Contents

by Daniel A. Galant

Just for you this May we will have on our ST disks some wonderful programs. To start off, our first disk will contain 'The Biz', a fully integrated accounts package that will allow you to finally get your finances in order.

On our second disk we have several appealing packages. First of all there's 'Rayoid' an Asteroids clone witha twist. This one allows you to play via modem or midi against someone else. Not bad eh? Next there are two more fun clones, 'Bugs' which is a Centapede clone and a Donkey Kong clone called Kid Kong.

To round out the disk, (and fill-er up!) we have included 'ST Tools' and 'ST Zip'. Tools is very much like the popular PC Tools for the PC and Zip is one of the newer archiving utilities for you to crunch up your files.

We will also have our regular 8-bit disk for all our regular 8-bitters to get. Bring your checkbook and spend money. (It's all for a good cause ya know.)

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May 1993

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16, 32 Bit Disk Of Month
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